

§ 1610.6

§ 1610.6 Applicability.

(a) The prohibitions referred to in §§ 1610.2(a)(3) (Criminal proceedings), (a)(4) (Actions challenging criminal convictions) or (b)(11) (Prisoner litigation) of this part will not apply to the non-LSC funds of the attorney, law firm, entity of attorneys, or the public defender program or project and will not apply to funds received to support criminal or related cases accepted pursuant to a court appointment, if the Corporation or a recipient makes a contract or other arrangement for the provision of civil legal assistance with:

(1) A private attorney, law firm or state or local entity of attorneys that represents clients in criminal cases or matters,

(2) A legal aid organization that provides criminal and related legal assistance through a separately funded public defender program or project; or

(3) A legal aid organization that accepts criminal or related cases pursuant to a court appointment.

(b) If a recipient uses non-LSC funds to enter into a contract or other arrangement with another person or entity for the provision of civil legal assistance, the restrictions referred to in this part will apply to the funds transferred, but will not apply to the other non-LSC funds of the person or entity.

(c) Except as provided in paragraph (a) of this section, this part does not apply to a transfer of LSC funds. Transfer of LSC funds is governed by 45 CFR part 1627.

§ 1610.7 Accounting.

Funds received by a recipient from a source other than the Corporation shall be accounted for as separate and distinct receipts and disbursements in a manner directed by the Corporation.

PART 1611—ELIGIBILITY

Sec.

1611.1 Purpose.

1611.2 Definitions.

1611.3 Maximum income level.

1611.4 Authorized exceptions.

1611.5 Determination of eligibility.

1611.6 Asset ceilings.

1611.7 Manner of determining eligibility.

1611.8 Retainer agreement.

1611.9 Change in circumstances.

45 CFR Ch. XVI (10–1–96 Edition)

APPENDIX A OF PART 1611—LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION 1996 POVERTY GUIDELINES

AUTHORITY: Secs. 1006(b)(1), 1007(a)(1), Legal Services Corporation Act of 1974; 42 U.S.C. 2996e(b)(1), 2996f(a)(1), 2996f(a)(2).

SOURCE: 48 FR 54205, Nov. 30, 1983, unless otherwise noted.

§ 1611.1 Purpose.

This part is designed to ensure that a recipient will determine eligibility according to criteria that give preference to the legal needs of those least able to obtain legal assistance, and afford sufficient latitude for a recipient to consider local circumstances and its own resource limitations. The part also seeks to ensure that eligibility is determined in a manner conducive to development of an effective attorney-client relationship.

§ 1611.2 Definitions.

Governmental program for the poor means any Federal, State or local program that provides benefits of any kind to persons whose eligibility is determined on the basis of financial need.

Income means actual current annual total cash receipts before taxes of all persons who are resident members of, and contribute to, the support of a family unit.

Total cash receipts include money wages and salaries before any deduction, but do not include food or rent in lieu of wages; income from self-employment after deductions for business or farm expenses; regular payments from public assistance; social security; unemployment and worker's compensation; strike benefits from union funds; veterans benefits; training stipends; alimony, child support and military family allotments or other regular support from an absent family member or someone not living in the household; public or private employee pensions, and regular insurance or annuity payments; and income from dividends, interest, rents, royalties or from estates and trusts. They do not include money withdrawn from a bank, tax refunds, gifts, compensation and/or one-time insurance payments for injuries sustained, and non-cash benefits.

§ 1611.3 Maximum income level.

(a) Every recipient shall establish a maximum annual income level for persons to be eligible to receive legal assistance under the Act.

(b) Unless specifically authorized by the Corporation, a recipient shall not establish a maximum annual income level that exceeds one hundred and twenty-five percent (125 percent) of the current official Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. The maximum annual income levels are set forth in Appendix A.

(c) Before establishing its maximum income level, a recipient shall consider relevant factors including:

- (1) Cost-of-living in the locality;
- (2) The number of clients who can be served by the resources of the recipient;
- (3) The population who would be eligible at and below alternative income levels; and
- (4) The availability and cost of legal services provided by the private bar in the area.

(d) Unless authorized by § 1611.4, no person whose income exceeds the maximum annual income level established by a recipient shall be eligible for legal assistance under the Act.

(e) This part does not prohibit a recipient from providing legal assistance to a client whose annual income exceeds the maximum income level established here, if the assistance provided the client is supported by funds from a source other than the Corporation.

§ 1611.4 Authorized exceptions.

(a) A person whose gross income exceeds the maximum income level established by a recipient but does not exceed 150 percent of the national eligibility level (125% of poverty) may be provided legal assistance under the Act if:

(1) The person's circumstances require that eligibility should be allowed on the basis of one or more of the factors set forth in § 1611.5(b)(1); or

(2) The person is seeking legal assistance to secure benefits provided by a governmental program for the poor.

(b) In the event that a recipient determines to serve a person whose gross income exceeds 125% of poverty, that

decision shall be documented and included in the client's file. The recipient shall keep such other records as will provide information to the Corporation as to the number of clients so served and the factual bases for the decisions made.

§ 1611.5 Determination of eligibility.

(a) The governing body of a recipient shall adopt guidelines, consistent with these regulations, for determining the eligibility of persons seeking legal assistance under the Act. By January 30, 1984, and annually thereafter, guidelines shall be reviewed and appropriate adjustments made.

(b) In addition to gross income, a recipient shall consider the other relevant factors listed in paragraphs (b)(1) and (b)(2) of this section before determining whether a person is eligible to receive legal assistance.

(1) Factors which shall be used in the determination of the eligibility of clients over the maximum income level shall include:

(A) Current income prospects, taking into account seasonal variations in income;

(B) Medical expenses, and in exceptional instances, with the prior, written approval of the project director based on written documentation received by the recipient and available for review by the Corporation, if a person's gross income is primarily committed to medical or nursing home expenses, a person may be served even if that person's gross income exceeds 150 percent of the national eligibility level;

(C) Fixed debts and obligations, including unpaid Federal, state and local taxes from prior years;

(D) Child care, transportation, and other expenses necessary for employment;

(E) Expenses associated with age or physical infirmity of resident family members; and

(F) Other significant factors related to financial inability to afford legal assistance.

(2) Factors which shall be used in the determination of the eligibility of clients under the maximum income level shall include:

§ 1611.6

(A) Current income prospects, taking into account seasonal variations in income;

(B) The availability of private legal representation at a low cost with respect to the particular matter in which assistance is sought;

(C) The consequences for the individual if legal assistance is denied;

(D) The existence of assets, including both liquid and nonliquid, which are available to the applicant and are in excess of the asset ceiling set by the recipient pursuant to § 1611.6;

(E) Other significant factors related to financial inability to afford legal assistance, which may include evidence of a prior administrative or judicial determination that the person's present lack of income results from refusal or unwillingness, without good cause, to seek or accept suitable employment.

(3)(A) If a recipient tentatively determines to serve a client over the maximum income level on the basis of factors listed in § 1611.5(b)(1), the factors listed in § 1611.5(b)(2) shall also be used before reaching a final determination.

(B) If a recipient tentatively determines not to serve a client under the maximum income level on the basis of factors listed in § 1611.5(b)(2), the factors listed in § 1611.5(b)(1) must also be used before reaching a final determination.

(c) A recipient may provide legal assistance to a group, corporation, or association if it is primarily composed of persons eligible for legal assistance under the Act and if it provides information showing that it lacks, and has no practical means of obtaining, funds to retain private counsel.

§ 1611.6 Asset ceilings.

(a) By January 30, 1984, and annually thereafter, the governing body of the recipient shall establish and transmit to the Corporation guidelines incorporating specific and reasonable asset ceilings, including both liquid and non-liquid assets, to be utilized in determining eligibility for services. The guidelines shall consider the economy of the service area and the relative cost-of-living of low-income persons so as to ensure the availability of services to those in the greatest economic and legal need.

45 CFR Ch. XVI (10–1–96 Edition)

(b) The guidelines shall be consistent with the recipient's priorities established in accordance with 45 CFR 1620 and special consideration shall be given to the legal needs of the elderly, institutionalized, and handicapped.

(c) Assets considered shall include all liquid and non-liquid assets of all persons who are resident members of a family unit, except that a recipient may exclude the principal residence of a client. The guidelines shall take into account impediments to an individual's access to assets of the family unit or household.

(d) Reasonable equity value in work-related equipment which is essential to the employment or self-employment of an applicant or member of a family unit, shall not be utilized to disqualify an applicant, provided that the owner is attempting to produce income consistent with its fair market value.

(e) The governing body may establish authority for the project director to waive the ceilings on minimum allowable assets in unusual or extremely meritorious situations. In the event that a waiver is granted, that decision shall be documented and included in the client's file. The recipient shall keep such other records as will provide information to the Corporation as to the number of clients so served and the factual basis for the decisions made.

§ 1611.7 Manner of determining eligibility.

(a) A recipient shall adopt a simple form and procedure to obtain information to determine eligibility in a manner that promotes the development of trust between attorney and client. The form and procedure adopted shall be subject to approval by the Corporation, and the information obtained shall be preserved, in a manner that protects the identity of the client, for audit by the Corporation.

(b) If there is substantial reason to doubt the accuracy of the information, a recipient shall make appropriate inquiry to verify it, in a manner consistent with an attorney-client relationship.

(c) Information furnished to a recipient by a client to establish financial eligibility shall not be disclosed to any

Legal Services Corporation

Pt. 1611, App. A

person who is not employed by the recipient in a manner that permits identification of the client, without express written consent of the client, except that the recipient shall provide such information to the Corporation when:

(1) The Corporation is investigating allegations that question the financial eligibility of a previously identified client and the recipient's representation thereof;

(2) The information sought by the Corporation relates solely to the financial eligibility of that particular client;

(3) The information sought by the Corporation is necessary to confirm or deny specific allegations relating to that particular client's financial eligibility and the recipient's representation thereof; and

(4) The specific information sought by the Corporation is not protected by the attorney-client privilege.

The information provided to the Corporation by the recipient shall not be disclosed to any person who is not employed by the Corporation. Prior to providing the information to the Corporation, the recipient shall notify the client that the recipient is required to provide to the Corporation the information sought.

§ 1611.8 Retainer agreement.

(a) A recipient shall execute a written retainer agreement, in a form approved by the Corporation, with each client who receives legal services from the recipient. The retainer agreement shall be executed when representation commences (or, if not possible owing to an emergency situation, as soon thereafter as is practicable), and shall clearly identify the relationship between the client and the recipient, the matter in which representation is sought, the nature of the legal services to be provided, and the rights and responsibilities

of the client. The recipient shall retain the executed retainer agreement as part of the client's file, and shall make the agreement available for review by the Corporation in a manner which protects the identity of the client.

(b) A recipient is not required to execute a written retainer agreement when the only service to be provided is brief advice and consultation.

§ 1611.9 Change in circumstances.

If an eligible client becomes ineligible through a change in circumstances, a recipient shall discontinue representation if the change in circumstances is sufficiently likely to continue for the client to afford private legal assistance, and discontinuation is not inconsistent with the attorney's professional responsibilities.

APPENDIX A OF PART 1611—LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION 1996 POVERTY GUIDELINES*

Size of family unit	All States but Alaska and Hawaii ¹	Alaska ²	Hawaii ³
1	\$9,675	\$12,075	\$11,138
2	12,950	16,175	14,900
3	16,225	20,275	18,663
4	19,500	24,375	22,425
5	22,775	28,475	26,188
6	26,050	32,575	29,950
7	29,325	36,675	33,713
8	32,600	40,775	37,475

¹For family units with more than eight members, add \$3,275 for each additional member in a family.

²For family units with more than eight members, add \$4,100 for each additional member in a family.

³For family units with more than eight members, add \$3,763 for each additional member in a family.

[61 FR 12041, Mar. 25, 1996]

*The figures in this table represent 125% of the poverty guidelines by family size as determined by the Department of Health and Human Services.

PART 1612—RESTRICTIONS ON LOBBYING AND CERTAIN OTHER ACTIVITIES

Sec.

1612.1 Purpose.

1612.2 Definitions.

1612.3 Prohibited legislative and administrative activities.

1612.4 Grassroots lobbying.

1612.5 Permissible activities using any funds.

1612.6 Permissible activities using non-LSC funds.

1612.7 Public demonstrations and activities.

1612.8 Training.

1612.9 Organizing.

1612.10 Recordkeeping and accounting for activities funded with non-LSC funds.

1612.11 Recipient policies and procedures.

AUTHORITY: Sections 504(a) (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), and (12), 504 (b) and (e), Pub. L. 104–134, 110 Stat. 1321; 42 U.S.C. 2996e(b)(5); 2996f(a) (5) and (6); 2996f(b) (4), (6) and (7), and 2996g(e).

SOURCE: 61 FR 45745, Aug. 29, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

§ 1612.1 Purpose.

The purpose of this rule is to ensure that LSC recipients and their employees do not engage in certain prohibited activities, including representation before legislative bodies or other direct lobbying activity, grassroots lobbying, participation in rulemaking, public demonstrations, advocacy training, and certain organizing activities. The rule also provides guidance on when recipients may participate in State or local fund raising or in public rulemaking, and when they may respond to requests of legislative and administrative officials using non-LSC funds.

§ 1612.2 Definitions.

(a)(1) Grassroots lobbying means any oral, written or electronically transmitted communication or any advertisement, telegram, letter, article, newsletter, or other printed or written matter or device which contains a direct suggestion to the public to contact public officials in support of or in opposition to pending or proposed legisla-

tion, regulations, executive decisions, or any decision by the electorate on a measure submitted to it for a vote. It also includes the provision of financial contributions by recipients to or participation by recipients in any demonstration, march, rally, fund raising drive, lobbying campaign, letter writing or telephone campaign for the purpose of influencing the course of such legislation, regulations, decisions by administrative bodies, or any decision by the electorate on a measure submitted to it for a vote.

(2) Grassroots lobbying does not include communications which are limited solely to reporting the content or status of pending or proposed legislation or regulations or the effect which such legislation or regulations may have on eligible clients or on their legal representation.

(b) Legislation means any action or proposal for action by Congress or by a State or local legislative body which is intended to prescribe law or public policy. The term includes, but is not limited to, action on bills, constitutional amendments, the ratification of treaties and intergovernmental agreements, approval of appointments and budgets, and approval or disapproval of actions of the executive. It does not include those actions of a legislative body which adjudicate the rights of individuals under existing laws; nor does it include legislation adopted by an Indian Tribal Council.

(c) Public policy means an overall plan embracing the general goals and procedures of any governmental body and pending or proposed statutes, rules, and regulations.

(d)(1) Rulemaking means any agency process for formulating, amending, or repealing rules, regulations or guidelines of general applicability and future effect issued by the agency pursuant to Federal, State or local rulemaking procedures, including:

(i) The customary procedures that are used by an agency to formulate and